India

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Last week we had no sooner remarked on the discontinuance of the Viceroy's telegram on the famine than another despatch appeared, just a month later than the one preceding. It shows that close upon a quarter of a million (238,000) persons are still in receipt of relief, the Bombay Presidency keeping a clear lead with the larger half (187,000). The latest separate Bombay statement that has come to hand speaks of a "recrudescence of famine conditions in Ahmednagar and Sholapur," but says that the increase of the numbers in receipt of gratuitous relief in villages and poor-houses "is due to the inclusion of numbers not counted in the previous weeks"—that is to say, the weeks before December. It seems unfortunate that the people in this country are not kept more fully informed of the conditions prevailing in the famine districts. One cannot but suspect that lamentable ignorance of the facts has materially influenced the public contributions to the relief funds, which now seem to have practically dried up—as if no more aid were needed, and, indeed, urgently and painfully needed!

The Belgaum correspondent of the *Mahratta* gives a gloomy picture of the agricultural outlook. In some parts of the Karnatic the crop returns are again unsatisfactory. In the Athani Taluka not only is there a scarcity of food, but also of water. There is even a rumour that the Government intend to open relief works in the Bijapur district. The writer continues:—

> But I am sure that they will not be able to confine the works to that alone, and many thousands in the Karnatic will have to depend upon the bounty and charity of Government for their bread.

Does this mean that certain districts of India are on the verge of another famine?

We have the pleasure of publishing in our present issue the first portion of the Address delivered by the Hon. Mr. Chandavakar as President of the recent Session of the Indian National Congress, and we shall take the earliest opportunity of giving the rest. It will be seen that he discussed the most pressing problems with a moderation and firmness of tone and with a thoroughness of appreciation entirely in consonance with the traditions of the Presidential chair. The little spirt of "dissatisfaction" expressed on the Bombay side seems to be amply explained by the Lahore *Tribune* in a passage which we cite in another column. It would have been an unfortunate blunder if a large courtesy and a broad sense of justice displayed towards the authorities had been held to disqualify Mr. Chandavakar from maintaining the political claims of his countrymen, with like courtesy and justice, in the chair of the great national meeting of progressive India. It will be noted that even the *Times of India* (quoted elsewhere to-day) makes frank acknowledgment of his high personal and professional merit. The Address was worthy alike of his reputation and of the occasion.

The *Friend of India*, after reading the manifesto of Sir William Wedderburn and his colleagues, expresses its firm conviction that, if the Congress be only true to itself, the time must come when official neglect of its representations will be impossible. It goes on:—

> At the same time it may be regarded as morally certain that it will be not so much through the direct influence of the Congress on Indian official opinion as through its influence on British public opinion that this result will be brought about.

The Indian Constitution allows the Government to disregard local public opinion.

> Practically all that the Congress has accomplished—and it is unquestionable that it has accomplished much—has been achieved as a result of the influence brought to bear by its representatives in England, and their friends, on British public opinion.

There is the weak point of the Indian Government, which cannot disregard the wishes of the Home authorities. We print an article of our contemporary's on another page.

Mr. Alfred Nundy, in a recent letter on the warmer feeling for the Indian National Congress among Mahometans, remarked at some length on the attitude of Sir Syed Ahmed. Mr. Theodore Morison has now written to the *Pioneer* to correct Mr. Nundy, and in the course of his explanations condemns what he calls "the chief plank in the Congress platform"—"representative institutions for India." He cites Mr. John Stuart Mill as follows:—

> Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. . . . When nations thus divided are under a despotic Government which is a stranger to all of them . . . . in the course of a few generations, identity of situation often produces harmony of feelings, and the different races come to feel towards each other as fellow-countrymen, particularly if they are dispersed over the same tract of country. But if the era of aspiration to free Government arrives before this fusion has been effected, the opportunity has gone by for effecting it.

In the last sentence, he thinks, Mill "has by anticipation emphatically condemned the policy of the National Congress." But although it may be that "the politicians of the Congress have always professed the highest reverence for Mill's political teaching," how can Mr. Morison imagine that they would bind themselves to every doctrine of the master? Besides, do they in fact contravene this particular doctrine? Or, rather, does not Mr. Morison interpret the facts to which the doctrine is to be applied in a different manner from them? Mill is quite right, and so is the policy of the Congress.

Mr. Morison has a practical objection, however, as well as the speculative one. He says:—

> Representative institutions would do harm in this way. An inevitable result of representative Government is the formation of parties, and where the electors are not held together by the bond of common nationality, these parties will inevitably be formed upon the lines of racial or religious antipathy; political controversy, which is the breath of English public life, will in India only embitter the deplorable hostility of Hindus and Mahometans.

Is not Mr. Morison aware that year after year the Government officials report most favourably on the working of Indian municipalities in which representative government is in operation? Is he not aware of the harmony and mutual consideration of Hindus and Mahometans in the late Corporation of Calcutta? Can he deny Mr. Nundy's assertion that Mahometans are becoming more and more favourable to the Congress, and that both communities work together amicably in the affairs of the Congress? And, after all, where is the good of arguing against representative institutions in the face of the fact that they have taken root in India, and only want fair play to develop gradually there as they have done elsewhere. "Sir Syed," Mr. Morison says, "believed that the best hope of reconciling the two communities lay in maintaining the autocracy of the British Government intact." Did he really wish to check all political growth in India? And, if he did, is it possible that Mr. Morison can regard such a position as practicable? Finally, has there not been fusion even in the sphere of religion?

The London correspondent of the *Manchester Evening News* made a startling announcement on Tuesday. "The gossips of some of the Conservative clubs," he stated, insist that further Ministerial changes are to be made. "A new Secretary for India is one of the matters being pressed in some quarters because"—and mark the reason —"Lord George Hamilton is so unsympathetic, so unresponsive about Indian affairs." It would be uncivil, and perhaps inaccurate, to say that this is too good to be true. But is not Lord George Hamilton improving a little? And whom would Lord Salisbury appoint to be a more sympathetic and responsive successor? In any case there are at least two reasons why expectation should be restrained. One is that the correspondent himself does not regard his story as probable. The other is that a report of what is stated to have been said by persons described as "the gossips of some of the Conservative clubs" does not immediately arrest the human mind as the best evidence.

Several of the Indian journals have not been slow to make a home thrust at Lord Curzon for the ridicule he threw upon the representative character of the Mahajana Sabha. The Anglo-Indian officials themselves form but a small minority in the vast populations they rule, and claim to speak for. Why, *Truth* tells us at home that "we are a commercial and industrial nation ruled by a comparatively few aristocratic families." The Lahore *Tribune* says :—

> To us Indians it is an interesting phenomenon that, while Englishmen are content to be represented and governed by a "microscopic minority," they should pooh-pooh the claims of a similar "microscopic minority" in India to represent the people of the country. When the Indian National Congress or some Indian political association asks for certain reforms or extension of privileges, the reply is that the organisation has no title to speak for the entire population as it is composed of a few educated people alone! Now we have not the figures at hand, but it is well-known that the House of Commons is made up mainly of the professional or other sections of the community in many respects similar to those that go to swell the ranks of the Congress or lesser political bodies in India. In every civilised country the most intelligent, the best informed, and the best educated men form the guiding and governing classes, but in India they are practically held to be of no account because they are so few in number!

The quarterly returns of the trade of the Bombay Presidency as borne by road and rail during the past year afford the *Times of India* much matter for congratulation. It notes how every province not itself famine-stricken sent its grain to Bombay, so that a general scarcity throughout the country took the place of a severe famine in particular districts. Moreover, many countries that had not previously exported food stuffs to India—*e.g.*, Victoria, Asiatic Turkey and Muscat—now took advantage of the favourable market. But with all this transfer of food to the famine area, we know how great the struggle was. It is, however, worth dwelling on these imports as a proof of what has so often been urged—that the famine was not so much a famine of grain as a famine of money. Food existed in plenty throughout the world, and could have been brought to the suffering people if the Indian peasantry had been rich enough to pay for its importation. Poverty is the true cause of famine.

The traffic returns are not, however, all matter for congratulation. One very sinister item was the sudden increase in the hide and skin traffic, telling of starving cattle, ruined peasants, and the future deterioration of agriculture. The trade in these articles, in fact, rose from 87,000 to 464,000 maunds—a more than fivefold growth—while the value increased from Rs. 30,00,000 to Rs. 1,02,99,000. There was another change in the trade of Bombay, to which we have adverted in a previous number, and which vividly reminds us of the impoverishment that follows famine. The importation of copper and brass vessels from Bombay declined, while the movement from the interior to Bombay increased. This means that the people were forced by stress of famine to sell their very household utensils.

The most interesting point in the reports of the Gujerat Revenue Enquiry which came by the last mail concern the payment of revenue out of taccavi. Ranchhod Magan of Saool gave evidence that he received from the patel Rs. 100 as taccavi, out of which Rs. 30 were deducted on account of the balance of assessment due from him. Amir Rahim of the same village said that he received Rs. 70, and Rs. 12 were deducted. Bhana Kohaya of Kathodra, who once owned twenty-one cattle, and had lost all but three by starvation, said that out of a taccavi of Rs. 110 he had paid Rs. 27 for the balance of revenue due, but he seems to have done this of his own motion. It is noteworthy that, according to the evidence of Rasool Myan, patel of Amode, the out-turn in the year 1898, the year before the famine, was thirty-three per cent. below the average.

The attack levelled by the *Madras Mail* at the plague administration in the State of Mysore, and Mr. Madhava Rao, the "Brahmin" Plague Commissioner, has been met in very different quarters with equal earnestness. The *Hindu* points out that the *Mail* has frequently praised the administration which it now condemns. In the really difficult times of 1897-98, it was widely recognised that Mysore treated the plague in a most efficient and sympathetic manner. The Anglo-Indian *Times of India* also notes the change of attitude in certain Madras papers, and for its part declares it sees no reason to withdraw the favourable judgment it has already passed. Moreover, Colonel Robertson, British Resident at Bangalore, declares that the criticisms are "clearly founded upon ignorance of local conditions." It is suggested by the *Times of India* that the attacks were made just before the Viceregal visit to Mysore in order to make an impression on Lord Curzon. If that be so, the attacks evidently failed in their object.

The kind and generous proposal of the Durban press that Indian troops should garrison Koomati Poort and other fever-stricken places in South Africa has elicited a strong protest from Colonel C. Pulley, 1st Battalion 3rd Goorkha Rifles. Colonel Pulley points out in the first place that the Indian regiments are officered by Europeans, whose lives are accounted as of some value even by Durban newspapers. Secondly, Indians are very liable to fever. Even in India at some seasons the hospitals are full of Indian soldiers, including some who have seen long service. The gallant colonel protests against the way in which his Indian comrades in arms are slighted. In an engraving of the charge of the Gordons at Dargai, he found that the artist had carefully left the Indian troops out of the picture.

A correspondent of a Lancashire contemporary, writing of the "labour question" in South Africa, speaks of the need of Indian workers, especially as "the South African native cannot be relied upon for steady work."

> There is (he says) a growing population in the Natal ports of South Indian origin, and if the introduction of Madrasi workpeople be not impeded by Government action, this Indian colony will be able to furnish valuable material for the establishment of factories, which should meet with the same success in Durban and other East coast ports as they have already encountered in Bombay.

"Valuable material for the establishment of factories"— not a pleasant phrase. But what is being done to secure the rights of British Indians in South Africa after the war? The question may well be addressed to Lord Lansdowne, among others. For he has assured us that before the war the treatment meted out to some of these Indians filled him with peculiar indignation; and his interest in Indian affairs is, Lord Curzon tells us, unimpaired.

There was a rather notable phrase in Lord Curzon's speech on the unveiling of Lord Lansdowne's statue last Monday. He described the present war in South Africa as "the first Empire war of Great Britain." The description, many people will think, is tolerably accurate. And it was for this war that India was able to spare so large a portion of the British Army which she is required to maintain. So wealthy is she, it seems, as to be able to bear the cost of troops whom, when the emergency arises, she can lend for a distant "Empire war," and an "Empire war" not apparently of the British Empire but of "Great Britain." This, as Lord Curzon truly said, is a "novel field." In another part of his speech he observes that Lord Lansdowne still takes a deep interest in India and Indian affairs. If so, he will bring his influence to bear in favour of a just apportionment of the cost of the British army in India.

The application for revision in the *Kalidas* case will be coming on for hearing probably about now. Mr. Justice Blair, having examined the papers which the Benares

Magistrate was ordered to produce, has placed the application on the Court file. Moreover, the High Court has directed that the editor, Mr. Guruji, should be released on bail, and that this should be of a reasonable amount. The printer was already out on bail.

In the excellent November issue of the *Madras Review*, Mr. P. A. Krishna Menon gives a melancholy account of "Agriculture in Malabar." If any part of India is "a purely agricultural country," it is Malabar. Mr. Justice Ranade once said:—

Every class of artisans—the spinners, weavers, and dyers, the oil-men, the paper-makers, the silk and sugar and metal workers, etc.—who are unable to bear up against Western competition, resort to the land, leave the towns and go into the country, and are lost in the masses of helpless people who were unable to bear up against scarcity and famine.

Mr. Krishna Menon affirms that "to no part of India is this remark more applicable than to Malabar." What, then, has the Government been doing to remedy the evil? "It is painful," says Mr. Krishna Menon, "to consider that the State renders no help to the cultivators in their struggle for existence."

The Government, it is true, has passed a long series of statutes, and "not one of them fails to add substantially to the public coffers." The pity is that "in none of these Acts passed ungrudgingly by the Legislature do we find any provision that gives the slightest help or encouragement to the real producers of wealth." Even where an Act might be useful it is marred by the incidental machinery or clogged by "complicated and unintelligible 'standing orders.'" Again:—

The Forest Law has done what it can to injure the prospects of the cultivators living in the vicinity of the Ghauts. It has deprived them of the valuable leaf manure, which is so indispensable for improving the soil. It has deprived them of the timber with which they used to make their tools of husbandry. It has deprived them of the pasture for their cattle. . . . .

What the Forest Law has done to the up-country people, the Salt Law has done with greater success to the people of the coast. Cocoanut is the staple produce of the West coast. It is well known that salt is the best manure for cocoanut trees, and Providence has created a large supply of it on this coast, which can be manufactured in a very short time at a nominal cost of time and money. The salt so extensively manufactured was freely used for human consumption also. This manufacture our Government, solely for fiscal purposes, has put a stop to. A large number of honest and hard-working people, who are thrown out of employ by the enactment of the Salt Law, now presses upon the land, and those who cannot find work as cultivators have turned beggars or robbers.

Akbari Law has also deprived several thousands of persons of their means of sustenance and they also share the same fate.

Here is a very serious indictment presented by a most capable observer.

Has the Government no remedy, then? Yes, a revenue settlement—not a permanent settlement, though, "but only an enhancement of revenue with a promise that a periodical revision will take place—which will never fail to bring more money to the public purse." But "the credit of the landholder is gone"; and "all the subordinate tenures have lost their market value." The land revenue is exacted from the tenant, who is also taxed on his improvements.

Not a pie is spent by the State for improving the land, yet, as soon as any tract of waste land is reclaimed and rendered cultivable at considerable expense to the individual, the revenue authorities at once find it out and heavy assessment is imposed upon it.

The stereotyped official reply to petitions and memorials is "Declined to interfere." So Mr. Krishna Menon "makes this representation through the pages of this *Review*, so that the Government of its accord might be pleased to do something on the lines" of these suggestions:—

(1) To supply to the cultivator at cost price the improved implements of agriculture approved by experts as suited to this country.

(2) To supply to them at cost price small machines suited to their means and adapted to their requirements for raising water from wells, tanks, and rivers, to irrigate their fields.

(3) To appoint a few hands—two or three for the whole district will suffice—to teach the cultivators how to use them and how to make the necessary repairs when the machines get out of order.

Mr. Krishna Menon defends the people against "official report writers," and others, who call them "ignorant, indolent, apathetic, and non-progressive, without considering their circumstances."

The *Globe*, we understand, has sensibly atoned for its unfortunate attack on Mr. Tilak. The *Champion* says:—

We are glad to learn that the *Globe* newspaper of London has been brought to a sense of the great wrong that it did to Mr. Tilak in charging him with pursuing a campaign of murder. The *Globe*, we learn, is willing to apologise to Mr. Tilak, and is willing to pay him all expenses he has been put to in reference to his threatened action against that journal, and, in addition, the proprietors of the *Globe* will make a donation to the Indian Famine Fund. On the whole, the *Globe* has got off very well. It was an atrocious libel. . . . . In company with the *Daily Mail*, the *Globe* has cruelly calumniated the educated classes of this country, and it is satisfactory that our friend has had a nasty fall. We hope the *Globe*, with others, will benefit by the lesson. India is not peopled by savages, nor are her leading men criminals, such as some would have the English public believe. It has taken a great deal of worry to drive this fact into the head of the *Globe*, but it has been driven, and for this we are thankful.

At the same time, Indians will gratefully remember the *Globe's* activity in raising a fund for the Indian stretcher-bearers in the Natal campaign.

On December 10 last the Principal of the Poona College of Science published a notification of which the following are the opening sentences:—

Owing to *increase in numbers* it has been decided to hold a competitive Examination commencing on January 7th for admission into the Engineering Branch of the College. *Forty* (40) *students will be admitted*. Of these forty vacancies thirty will be reserved for graduates or undergraduates of the Bombay University.

The notice, for such a surprising change, is curiously short; and "increase in numbers" would seem to be the last imaginable reason. The *Mahratta* has doubts about the validity of the ukase. It says:—

The notification itself makes no mention of any orders by the Bombay Government, or even the Director of Public Instruction, justificatory of the rule by which the admission to the Engineering branch of the College of Science will be limited to forty students coming from this or any other Presidency. Such a restriction upon admission is entirely a novel feature injuriously affecting the interests of the student-world; and we fail to see how the Principal of the College of Science or even the D. P. I. for the matter of that can initiate such a serious departure from the traditions of the College entirely on his own responsibility, without previously obtaining the sanction of the Bombay Government. We think this want of sanction is an insuperable preliminary objection to the step taken by the Principal; and we appeal to Government to order the stay of the enforcement of the new rule for this year at least till the important question involved therein is fully discussed by the public and considered by the Government.

The following, we understand, is the list of subjects submitted for discussion at the Session of the Indian Social Conference, held, as usual, immediately after the close of the Congress Session:—

1. To promote the physical, moral, and religious education of girls.
2. To popularise the temperance movement, especially among the classes which are most addicted to drink.
3. The re-admission of converts and the social elevation of low castes.
4. To promote the cause of individual, family, and social purity in thought, speech and action. To discourage Nautches.
5. To establish Orphanages for the relief of famine-stricken orphans.
6. Widow re-marriage reform.
7. The moral, religious, and physical education of boys.
8. The postponement of the limits of the marriageable age of boys and girls.
9. Extravagant expenditure on marriages and the levy of heavy dowries and sulka.
10. The sea voyage movement.
11. The evils resulting from exchange marriages.
12. Discouragement of second marriage in the life-time of the first wife.
13. Condemnation of ill-assorted marriages.
14. To promote inter-marriages between sub-castes.

The President of the Indian Social Conference, Diwan Sant Ram, "is the grandson of the elder brother of the great Diwan Sawan Mul (father of Diwan Mul Raj) who, as Governor of Multan under Runjit Singh, gave a sample of British justice to the people of the Punjab."

Remittances on India for 60 lakhs were on Wednesday offered for tender by the India Council, and applications amounting to Rs. 2,22,55,000 were received at prices ranging from 1s. $4\frac{1}{32}$d. to 1s. $4\frac{1}{8}$d. The following amounts were allotted—viz., in bills, Rs. 23,98,000 on Calcutta, Rs. 12,89,000 on Bombay, and Rs. 5,23,000 on Madras, all at an average of 1s. 4·031d.; and in telegraphic transfers Rs. 18,90,000 on Calcutta at an average of 1s. 4·099d. Tenders for bills at 1s. $4\frac{1}{32}$d. will receive about 25 per cent., and for transfers at 1s. $4\frac{3}{32}$d. about 25 per cent., and above in full. Later the Council sold bills for Rs. 20,000 on Madras at 1s. $4\frac{1}{16}$d. Last week remittances for Rs. 60,32,250 were sold for £403,152, making the total disposed of from April 1 to Tuesday night Rs. 11,48,44,659, producing £7,645 399. Next week the amount to be offered will be increased to 70 lakhs.

THE DREAD OF ENQUIRY.

LITTLE has been heard so far in England of the Session of the Indian National Congress which ended on the last day of the old century. The globe-girdling Reuter, who in former years has been the chief means of communication between the Congress and the public at home, has on this occasion refrained from words even of good omen. What, one wonders, is the reason or the cause of the silence? For there are still occurrences even in India of which Reuter is good enough to inform studious Imperialists at home, as witness a long telegram of Monday last describing the unveiling of the statue which it took so much touting to procure for Lord Lansdowne. Is one to suppose that Reuter is too busy reporting Viceregal elcquence to have time to notice so slight a thing as the annual conference of educated India? Or is it "reasons of State" that have suggested the expediency of keeping little England ignorant of what many of the wisest heads at the circumference of the Empire are thinking? These are conundrums, and we give them up. But the circumstances under which the British press as a whole, and therefore the British public as a whole, have been deprived of the usual telegraphic reports of the Congress, ought to be, and will be, carefully sifted and explained. The British public has not an inkling of the extent to which mere vendors of news are able to determine whether it shall remain ignorant, or how much it shall know, of events of great importance. The war in South Africa, and the events which preceded and produced it, might have been expected to drive the lesson home. But the lesson still remains to be learned, and until it is learned the "foreign intelligence" (as it is agreeably termed) of an Imperial race will depend upon the discriminating favour of an insignificant group of traders in news. A valuable and interesting essay might be written upon the nature and extent of the political influence which is in this way obtained by what ought to be, and what are commonly believed to be, merely telegraphic machines. The author of the phrase "Let me write a nation's ballads, and I care not who makes its laws" might in these latter days be disposed to amend it and say "Let me draft a nation's telegrams, and I care not who writes its leading articles." For many of the leading articles which the silence of Reuter has averted there need be no regrets. The multiplication of journals, Mr. John Morley somewhere says, "has done much to make vulgar ways of looking at things and vulgar ways of speaking of them stronger and stronger, by formulating and repeating and stereotyping them incessantly from morning until afternoon, and from year's end to year's end. For a newspaper must live, and to live it must please, and its conductors suppose, perhaps not altogether rightly, that it can only please by being very cheerful towards prejudices, very chilly to general theories, loftily disdainful to the men of a principle." But the "sagacious silliness" of editorial columns has hitherto been more than counteracted by tolerably full reports, which have at least made the reader aware of the chief demands put forward by the leaders of educated India. That these reports have been missing, for whatever reason, on the present occasion is deplorable, and the loss is one which concerns not solely or primarily the Congress itself.

But this silence about the Congress is, we fear, characteristic of our Imperialists' present mode of regarding India. Denunciations of sedition which does not exist have become stale and ridiculous. Sneers at an organisation which, at the close of a year of unexampled famine, is able to muster six hundred delegates in remote Lahore are neither easy nor convincing. In these circumstances the guides of Imperialist thought, if they referred to the Congress at all, would have been almost compelled to discuss its resolutions, which is a thing not lightly to be done. For what was the keynote alike of the Presidential Address and of the general discussion? "Statesmanship," said Mr. Chandavakar, "is wanted to solve the problem of the poverty of India, which is the real cause of periodical famine." So, too, among the claims which the Congress urges, the first is for "an enquiry into the general economic condition of the people of India." It is high time that the British public, with whom in the last resort the responsibility rests, began to realise the nervous dread with which our ruling classes shrink from any enquiry of the kind. In view of the appalling suffering which the Indian people have endured and are enduring, one would have thought that rulers secure in the consciousness of wise and unselfish administration would have not merely permitted but hastened to undertake enquiry into the causes of famine. Having failed to adopt this course, they would, one would think, have appreciated the necessity of it so soon as a large body of competent observers publicly stated the view that these economic causes are closely connected with certain fundamental defects in the present mode of administering the country. If zealous stewardship does not suggest enquiry, considerations of honour and probity should compel it. But still the Government of India and the India Office will have none of it. They prefer to go out of their way to confirm the predictions of their least friendly critics. In 1896-97 India was devastated by a famine which the Viceroy described as the worst famine of the century. Three years later came another famine, which another Viceroy said was unparalleled in intensity. During and after each famine there were those who said, publicly and with emphasis, that the authorities would not dare to face enquiry into the economic causes. The challenge was ignored, and judgment has gone by default. In 1897 the Secretary of State for India promised Parliament that the famine should be followed by an enquiry which, among other things, would seek to discover means to prevent a recurrence of the calamity. Yet when the Famine Commission was appointed it was carefully limited to the comparatively insignificant task of amending minor details in the system of relief. The Anglo-Indian press rejoiced at this limitation, as men might rejoice who have avoided a punishment that seemed to be impending. The inference from these facts was almost irresistible, and it has now been confirmed. The calculations of the experts were egregiously falsified when an intense famine was followed by one still more intense after an interval of only three years. Yet the new Famine Commission is cribbed, cabined and confined like its predecessor. Economic causes of famine must be avoided like the plague. Periodical famine in India must be regarded as a dispensation of Providence. The only legitimate problem for "loyal" and decent men is how best to mitigate the effects of famine when it comes. Such, in the teeth of adverse and able criticism, is the attitude of the beneficent rulers of India, while the representatives of India's dumb long-suffering peasants assert that poverty is the real cause of periodical famine and demand enquiry into the general economic condition of the people.

As for the answer which is sometimes put forward by the apologists of the India Office, nothing could be more suicidal. They refer us to the recent Royal Commission. To do that is merely to produce a palmary example of enquiry burked and maimed. For what was Lord Welby's Commission? It was a Commission to enquire into "the administration and management of Indian expenditure," and it was granted in response to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's repeated request, not at all for a Commission of that kind, but for a Commission to enquire into both revenue and expenditure, the ability or inability of the Indian people to bear their existing burdens, and the general economic condition of India. What was granted was less than one-third of what was asked, and it was in the two-thirds which were excluded that the really fundamental questions arose. Nor was that all. Having limited the enquiry to expenditure, the Government took great pains to exclude from its scope every question of policy and every topic into which questions of policy entered. That is the sort of retreat which, among the apologists of Anglo-Indian bureaucracy, is called "facing the music." The question is—and, so far as India is concerned, it is the main question which the old century bequeaths to the new—How much longer is this blind and humiliating policy to continue? We do not expect a satisfactory answer from the India Office, or from the Government of India. We expect it, and we must strive to compel it, from the people of England. It is their reputation which is at stake. It is they who are besmirched by the refusal of their agents to face the facts. There is not an audience in the United Kingdom, of any political party or of none, which, if the issue were faithfully put before it, would choose that enquiry into the economic causes of famine in India should be prohibited. On the contrary, the British public would court such enquiry, and if it revealed errors of policy would desire to remove them. To bring the facts con-

cerning India's economic position home to the British public, and to make them aware of their terrible responsibility, is the task which confronts the Indian Congress and all its friends at the dawn of the new century. No task could be more worthy of the most strenuous exertions.

UNDER CROSS FIRE.

UNEASY lies the head—of a Viceroy. And uneasier still, for some time to come, will the Viceregal head lie, Lord Curzon's or another's. Time was—away back in the days of Clive and Hastings—when the Chief of the Government was harassed beyond ordinary endurance, and his bitterest foes were those of his own Council. For the most part, however, during the last century, the Governor-General has had only to do what seemed good in his own eyes, or in the eyes of his official advisers (which was practically the same thing), to ensure a tolerably quiet life. But now the natural progress of an awakened national consciousness has gradually brought into the political arena a fresh force, which recent Viceroys have acknowledged must be reckoned with. The steady growth and the increasingly active manifestations of this popular force necessarily tend to disturb and disrupt the solidified system of official ideas of Indian government and administration. The modern Viceroy, instead of one set of antagonists, is challenged by two sets, and is sorely put to it to run a course that shall not bring him into collision with the one or the other of the contending claimants for his sympathy and support. The recent declarations of Lord Curzon at Bombay in recognition of the right of educated India to a respectful hearing—declarations which seem to embody the simplest and most obvious common sense—appear to have brought to a head a gathering storm of official displeasure. And what is this that we read in the *Morning Leader* of January 4?

> We regret to hear that the health of Lady Curzon of Kedleston does not improve in India. The Viceroy keeps well enough himself, but is much worried about his wife, and it is expected that they will return home this year.
>
> Lord Curzon is disappointed in the results of his work. He thought he was going to clean out the Simla offices, and made one or two heroic efforts at the start. But, as always, the permanent official, by sitting tight like Fabius, has worn out the reformer, and is getting things his own way.

Every one would sincerely regret if Lady Curzon's health were affected by the climate of India; much more so if it should prove necessary for her to return to England. No doubt, too, Lord Curzon is finding out how mightily efficient the permanent official can prove himself when he resolves to obstruct the progress of a Viceroy towards a frank understanding with the leaders of the people. But we are very reluctant to believe that either Lady Curzon's health (unless really in a dangerous way) or the obstruction of a perverse officialdom will move Lord Curzon from his post till the completion of his term of office. His ambition—and we will add his sense of duty—is made of sterner stuff. We do not think we are under any illusions as to Lord Curzon's performance in his great office, but we confess we should regard his early departure from India as a most unfortunate occurrence, as things now stand, both for India and for Britain.

It is hardly to be supposed that Lord Curzon will be so much edified as amused when the enthusiastic *Englishman* tells the world that he "has already shown himself the greatest Governor-General India has yet seen." There is a more bracing air, probably, about the *Indian Mirror's* carefully considered restriction of its contemporary's expansive proposition. The *Mirror*, from a widely different point of view, thinks he "promises to be our greatest Viceroy." It is well, indeed, to have high hopes—provided always the grounds are fairly reasonable; and, for our own part, we should heartily wish that every Viceroy in regular succession should prove himself the greatest. But it seems rather a risky enterprise to take the final measure of a Viceroy before he is half way through his term; and it becomes a very equivocal kindness when the measure is an extravagance of preposterous adulation. Then, on the other hand, comes the London correspondent of the *Advocate* of Bombay (December 21) with very different conclusions (advanced in another connexion):—

> Lord Curzon acknowledged the greetings of the Congress; he wrote a strong minute on the Rangoon outrage; he has promulgated some rules for the protection of the lives and limbs of her Majesty's Indian subjects from the wanton outrage of the wild and drunken British soldier. These are good and kindly acts no doubt, and we are thankful to Lord Curzon for them, but these are not matters really of any vital value to the political life of the people. They simply prove that Lord Curzon is a kind man, and not that he is a liberal and far-sighted statesman.

Yes, but let us "hold the scales even" to Lord Curzon. These acts surely prove not only that he is a kind man, but that he is a just man, and what is a good deal more—a just Viceroy; and, while the acts would seem to the ordinary citizen most obvious acts of duty, yet, in Lord Curzon's circumstances, they undoubtedly enter into "liberal statesmanship." Nor can we forget his firm and consistent reversal of the North-West policy—enforced, it may be, by want of money in the treasury, yet a matter of "far-sighted statesmanship" bearing weightily upon the recuperation of the prosperity of the country. The Bombay declarations are certainly of the highest importance. For what, indeed, can be of more hopeful significance than the words and deeds of a Viceroy which thrill the hearts of the people and move them to enthusiastic appreciation and confidence? If, then, Lord Curzon is to be obstructed by official and quasi-official forces in giving effect to his friendly intentions, certainly we are with the *Champion* in "standing by his Excellency," and we believe with our staunch Bombay contemporary that, if the Viceroy stand to his guns, "he will come out of the struggle a great man—a Viceroy whose name will resound in Indian history—a Viceroy who dared to stand by the people." More than that we venture to think that in no other way, but only by "daring to stand by the people," can he achieve either greatness for his Viceroyalty or permanent benefit to the Indian Empire. For this struggle has to be fought out, and the sooner the better. It goes to the very roots of Indian peace and prosperity. And the cause of the people must triumph.

At the same time the leaders of the people will certainly not shut their eyes to Viceregal vagaries and blunders. They will not, at this time of day, act so foolishly for their own cause, nor are they in the least likely to display a pusillanimity that would be gravely unjust to the Viceroy, as well as tantamount to a betrayal of their country. They remember well the monstrous conversion of the Calcutta Municipality into a department of the local Government. They do not forget the "extremely retrograde educational policy." Nor have they lain quiet under the chastisement of the Viceroy at Madras. There are plain enough reasons, however, why the earlier mistakes of Lord Curzon—and we should be the last to seek to minimise them—should not now be brought up in recrimination. It is different with the recent Madras utterances; it is well to strike when the iron is hot. One has great difficulty, indeed, in comprehending how or why Lord Curzon allowed himself to address the Mahajana Sabha in the terms and in the tone he adopted. Of course, he cannot possibly know everything, nor can it be hoped that he will always be accurately primed with information; but even so there remains an astonishing lack of sufficiency of explanation. Is it possible that Lord Curzon was left in as blank ignorance of the representative character of the Mahajana Sabha as the *Pioneer*? The Mahajana Sabha not only represents "certain elements in Hindu society in the Madras Presidency;" "it consists," as the *Hindu* points out, "not only of Mahometans and Hindus, but Christians as well," and "it receives support from nearly all communities." Did the official instructing the Viceroy belittle it because it constitutes "the Madras branch of the Indian National Congress," ignoring the fact that as such it "can speak with authority upon general questions discussed and voted upon at meetings of the Congress and the Provincial Conferences?" The *Hindu*, in chastisement of the *Pioneer*, properly recalls the following facts:—

> The Mahajana Sabha did not apply for the honour of being permitted to present an address to the Viceroy; but it was invited on behalf of his Excellency to do so in recognition of its importance as a representative body. That the Sabha does not seek "prestige" by presenting addresses to Viceroys may be sufficiently inferred from the fact that it refused to present any address to Lord Elgin when that Viceroy desired the Sabha to omit three paragraphs in its address relating to frontier wars and heavy military expenditure. Both Lord Dufferin and Lord Lansdowne received long addresses from the Sabha containing much controversial matter; but they both replied with great courtesy and dignity without seeking a forensic victory. We may also mention, what our contemporary and Lord Curzon do not know, that Lord Dufferin conferred Jubilee honours in 1887 on the Vice-President and the Secretary of the Mahajana as such, in recog-

nition of the importance of that body and in appreciation of the public services rendered by these two gentlemen as its office-bearers. The Government of India has also been from time to time asking the Mahajana Sabha to elect a representative for Madras to serve on the Imperial Institute in London.

But, apart from this misconception of the position and character of the Mahajana Sabha, it seems strange that Lord Curzon did not see, and did not reflect that the members of the Mahajana Sabha and all the world would see, how captious and futile was his line of argument, and how undignified was his tone of address. Who can doubt for a moment that the Mahajana Sabha was perfectly justified in representing that the demand for the separation of executive and judicial functions is "the unanimous voice of the Indian public"? And why should the Mahajana Sabha be fooled by such an argumentative assertion as that, on a 25 per cent. reduction of the land revenue assessment, not a man among them "would guarantee, or honestly believes, that there would be no more famine, no more poverty, no more distress"? It seems inexplicable.

The particular points in issue between the Viceroy and the Mahajana Sabha have been admirably dealt with in the Indian journals and need not be discussed here now. But we hope that Lord Curzon has read, marked, and digested a striking "Open Letter" addressed to him in "the *Hindu* Extra" of December 11, and signed "Madras," by a very able and temperate writer. The sum and substance of the conclusions of "Madras" as to the reforms awaiting solution at the Viceroy's hands is this:

Moderate the land assessment and extend irrigation works; facilitate the development of credit institutions; preserve the dismemberment of ancient zemindaries; regulate the relation of landlord and tenant by equitable legislation; prevent the misappropriation of religious endowments; allow the Local Government sufficient resources to develop the country by an equitable Provincial Contract; extend the sphere and usefulness of Local Self-Government; enlarge Legislative Councils; educate the people; admit the Indians to a reasonable share of high public offices, and you will not only not hear of famines, but you will find a land of plenty instead of poverty, of contentment instead of discontentment.

"But where," asks "Madras" very naturally, "is the statesman who will do all this for the unrepresented and voiceless people of India?" And, in spite of Lord Curzon's flouts, he answers this:—

Your high talents, remarkable insight, and thorough grasp of intricate questions raise in us hopes that India will find in you that statesman, and that, if you will only devote your attention to these subjects instead of frittering away your energies in the improvement of official routine and red tape, you will be able to achieve a large measure of success.

The Mahajana Sabha, being wholly in the right, may well follow the dignified and sensible example of "Madras," and calm its natural resentment, well assured that the Viceroy, being wholly in the wrong, will cherish a generous regret. The desired haven can be reached only through persistent and courageous, but cool and skilful, struggle with the adverse elements. And, while the Viceroy must stand the racket of continuous and stringent criticism, it is but fair to take account of his official difficulties, and it is elementary policy to sustain him, as far as possible, in his struggle to "hold the scales even."

OUR LONDON LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Thursday.

PERHAPS the most remarkable feature of the reception given to Lord Roberts in London last week was the approval which it elicited from all sorts and conditions of men. The Commander-in-Chief expressed his personal satisfaction by issuing a portentous message of thanks. Sir Edward Bradford allowed himself to be interviewed about the police arrangements. Critics who had intended to dwell on the untimeliness of a Roman triumph in the thick of a campaign found themselves disarmed by the subdued demeanour of the crowd. Even the Jingoes plucked consolation from the tameness of the proceedings by reflecting that Englishmen still knew how to maintain their ancient reticence. There was certainly none of that unbridled and extravagant rejoicing which the Ministerial journals had thought it necessary to deprecate. On the contrary, the crowd, according to Sir Edward Bradford, was the smallest for such an occasion that had been seen in London for many years, and it was also one of the most orderly and one of the least demonstrative. After all, the feeling that there was something a little incongruous in the reception could not be altogether suppressed. Perhaps, indeed, it was stimulated by the contents of the newspaper posters, which at the very moment of Lord Roberts's triumphal progress were proclaiming grave news from the Cape.

As the Queen has conferred an earldom on Lord Roberts without waiting for the conclusion of the war it is generally assumed that Parliament will be asked to complete his honours and emoluments with similar promptitude. Some objection may be raised to this course, but the opposition is not likely to be serious. Mr. Keir Hardie has announced his intention of opposing a considerable grant, and although Lord Roberts is an Irishman, the motion in all probability will also be resisted by the Nationalist members. On the other hand, most of the Liberals may be expected to vote with the Government. Some uncertainty exists as to the probable amount of the grant. Those who predicted that Lord Roberts would be made a duke urged that it would be shabby to give him less than £100,000, while others are strongly of opinion that half that amount should serve to gild a coronet. The longer the grant is delayed the more slender is it likely to become. But for the comparatively trifling victory of Omdurman Lord Kitchener received a reward equal to a gift of £30 000.

Unfortunately, the war in South Africa, unlike that in the Sudan, is not to be terminated by one or two, or even by three stricken fields. The Boers are as active as ever, and are more ubiquitous than at any previous stage of the campaign. They keep striking at the British line of communications, and every now and again succeed in replenishing their supplies by capturing a British convoy. Moreover, they have fairly invaded Cape Colony, where military law is now being enforced with increased rigour. The one gleam of light in a gloomy situation is the action of Lord Kitchener in disseminating the conciliatory proposals recently foreshadowed by Mr. Chamberlain. Better late than never; but if this had been done six months ago the result might have been more certain.

Political gossip during the last week has been chiefly concerned with the coming changes in the editorial staff and policy of the *Daily News*. As was indicated in this column last Thursday, the proprietary of the leading Liberal journal is about to change hands, Lord Brassey, Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. Oppenheim and their colleagues having disposed of their interest in the property to a syndicate composed amongst others of Mr. George Cadbury, Mr. W. Leon, and Mr. R. C. Lehmann. The sale of the paper is an important political event, indicating, as it does, that the Radical wing of the Opposition is not only in a state of buoyant and aggressive activity, but is also well supplied with the sinews of war. The amount of the purchase money has not been disclosed, but in current gossip it is estimated at from £200,000 to £250,000. An official statement promises that in future the paper will be an exponent of the historic principles of Liberalism. Under Mr. E. T. Cook's editorship it has been the chief organ of Liberal Imperialism.

Two of the three new members of the editorial staff were formerly connected with the *Daily Chronicle*. Mr. H. W. Massingham will succeed Mr. H. W. Lucy in Bouverie Street as writer of the Parliamentary notes, while Mr. Harold Spender, who was with Mr. Massingham on the *Daily Chronicle* and afterwards co-operated with him on the London staff of the *Manchester Guardian*, will now be assistant-editor of the reconstituted *Daily News*. The new editor is to be Mr. Lehmann, whose antipathy to the war first found expression, oddly enough, in the columns of *Punch*, to which, about a year ago, he contributed some caustic articles over the pseudonym of "The Vagrant." Mr. Lehmann's mother was a daughter of Dr. Robert Chambers of Edinburgh, so that he is a journalist almost by right of birth. He has also the advantage of being a man of means.

Two weeks ago people in London were crowding the roofs of omnibuses to enjoy the sunshine and balmy air of a season that seemed to have been stolen from the autumn of last year or the spring of this. To-day London is ankle-deep in mud which once was snow, and the whole population, enervated by a succession of mild winters, is crying out against the ordeal as if it were some unheard-of convulsion of Nature. One instructive lesson taught by the visitation is that, though new brooms in other spheres may sweep clean, they possess no such quality in the domain of municipal administration. Poor London is no better off under its fine new borough councils than if it were still under the heel of the vestries. People say that in America and on the Continent and even in some of our

own provincial towns, the authorities have discovered a way of removing snow which renders possible the continuance of ordinary street traffic all the winter through. But London is only London. It has never seen those wonders and does not believe in them.

Shakespeare continues to hold Mr. Bernard Shaw at bay. The latter keeps circling round the suburbs—although even there his rival "Cleopatra" has not yet been seen—whereas the earlier bard retains serene possession of two West-end houses. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the Lyceum revival of "Henry V" is the success of the dramatic season. It has even eclipsed the pantomimic glories of Drury Lane as a popular show; and yet its success is due not to any meretricious glitter of spectacular effect but chiefly to the fine elocution, gallant bearing, and virile acting of Mr. Lewis Waller as the soldier-king. And at the Comedy Theatre, too, Shakespeare's star is again in the ascendant. There is no more rollicking piece of comedy in all London than is to be enjoyed this week in Mr. F. R. Benson's performance of "The Taming of the Shrew."

NOTES FROM BOMBAY.

MARTIAL TAMASHAS.

THE FAMINE COMMISSION.

[From an Indian Correspondent.]

Bombay, December 21.

The Viceroy is back in his capital and Calcutta is gay again. Beauty and fashion are already congregated there. The cream of the official hierarchy, of course, is bound to spend its Christmas in the metropolis of the Empire in right "Imperial" fashion, whatever the definition nowadays of that word may be. There is to be the additional attraction of a march past of the Lumsden Horse returning immediately from the Cape. Of course, if Great Britain in the streets of London went mad with joy, grew riotous and licentious too, on the return of the stalwart C.I.V.'s, why should not India ape Great Britain and do likewise? Of course, the Calcutta celebration must be a miniature sham of the tamasha which took place in the City some weeks since. So that perhaps a week before this letter is in type you will have a cable flashing the news of the great doings of Calcutta, and specially of the hero-worship which it will pay to the returning mounted volunteers from South Africa. We at a distance will not only enjoy the fun of the pageantry as it may be wired to us, but have the opportunity of indulging in our own peculiar cynicism on that trumpery affair. It is a curious phase of English national life, how sometimes the people go off at a tangent in a paroxysm of ecstacy at martial ardour. The cold pen of the historian will, no doubt, give its due share of the *éclat* to the contemporary chroniclers; but it will also record in black and white the utter futility of much ado about nothing in particular.

At the same time I dare say, on your side too, there will be some further madness of joy on the return of that great hero, Lord Roberts. Whether he will march to London with barbaric pomp and midst the deafening din of the London populace after the manner of Hannibal, when that bold and enterprising Carthaginian entered the precincts of Rome, we shall not know till the cable has informed us of the actual doings. But I can well imagine what will happen after the march of the gallant C.I.V.'s. No doubt this is an age of heroes. Everyone is a hero from the youngest lieutenant to the most veteran Field-Marshal. Everybody is doing prodigies of valour in South Africa—prodigies which, in the words of that great word painter Macaulay, "might astonish the Great Captain." England is no longer "a nation of shopkeepers." No! it is a nation of warriors—all Spartan of Spartans, who either die on the field *with* their shields or return home elevated *on* their shields. I suppose after the grand ovation to Lord Roberts England will close its coal-mines and blow off its iron furnaces. The hum and din of millions of spindles and looms will be hushed. There will be no such thing as a bold peasantry, "the country's pride." They will turn their ploughshares into swords. The farmer's tweed will give way to the new-fangled "khaki." Each village and hamlet will be crowded with its contingent of heroes. Nothing but the fizz of guns and rifles and the thunder of cannon will be heard. In short, England will soon wear a martial aspect surpassing Imperial Rome, and breathe defiance to its nearest as well as its most distant neighbours. And what then? Let the historian of the future relate what the womb of Time may disclose.

Of course, in such a week as we are soon going to have politics and political news are proscribed. For the nonce they are relegated to the pigeon-holes of the secretive Secretariats, so that practically I have little news to give save that the Famine Commission is appointed. But it is in one way a complete disappointment. We have not a Commission of the character we had in 1879. There is, again, to be no such independent member of vast agricultural experience and knowledge as the late Sir James Caird. No. The third Commission is to be a replica of number two. Of course we have Sir Antony MacDonnell as President, and Mr. Nicholson, who has made agricultural banks his special study, a member thereof. But why Mr. Bourdillon is there I cannot say. Please remember that he is the identical official who had so much to do in the matter of that Pennell incident. How such a personage came to be appointed on the Commission is a puzzle. Be his knowledge what it may—and perhaps he is supposed to know a great deal about land tenures in Bengal—is it possible that Indians can have any confidence in his judgment? Is it likely he will take a calm and impartial view of matters? The last member is the Diwan of Jaipur, a State which, according to the impartial testimony of Mr. Vaughan Nash, did immensely well in coping with the severity of famine there. So far good. But after all what is the scope of reference? It seems to be simply an enquiry into the management of famine in Bombay and elsewhere. So far as the facts which such a Commission may elicit the public have nothing new to learn, though it may be that the Bombay Government may receive the benefit of white-washing for its sins of omission and commission. We are disposed to be charitable and willing that that Government should receive the necessary official unction. But that is not what is wanted. We want a *thorough* investigation into the whole question of the deep poverty of the masses in all India. Is it, or is it not, true that pauperisation of the peasantry is growing apace? What may be its causes? Why does Lord Curzon still shrink from facing that question? Why is he so inconsistent? Why is there such a difference between his words and action? If he really seeks the good of India, why does he not appoint on this very Commission two independent English members of great agricultural knowledge and experience? And why is not one of them made president of it? If that is not to be, we may discount beforehand the labour of this Commission. It will go the way of the previous one and India will not be benefited by a hairsbreadth. This is the view I take of this latest sham. Evidently there is no earnestness to probe to the bottom the question of the growing poverty of the masses. They prefer yet to conceal this the greatest skeleton in that official closet.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

238,000 ON RELIEF.

The Secretary of State for India has received the following telegram from the Viceroy on the subject of the famine:—

"Number of persons in receipt of relief:—Bombay, 187,000; Central Provinces, 5,000; Rajputana, 1,000; Bombay Native States, 16,000; Baroda, 13,000; Haidarabad, 16,000. Total, 225,000."

[The total ought to be 238,000. The official arithmetician has apparently omitted to count in the Baroda figures.]

THE MANSION HOUSE FUND.

The Mansion House Fund appears not to have been closed at the end of the year. On January 4 it was announced to have reached £391,500.

THE "INVESTORS' REVIEW" FUND.

We take the following from the current issue (January 5) of the *Investors' Review*:—

At last we have news from the Viceroy about the present condition of that small portion of a destitute people still in receipt of relief. He gives the total at 225,000, but his detailed figures foot up to 238,000—*i.e.*, Bombay, 187,000; Central Provinces, 5,000; Rajputana, 1,000; Bombay Native

States, 16,000; Baroda, 13,000; and Hyderabad, 16,000. The total is small, and seems about the minimum, for early in the year we may expect to see widespread destitution again asserting itself, because no adequate remedy—none at all, in fact, in most places—has been applied. Therefore this first year of the new century bids fair to bring the impoverishment of India again prominently before this country. It will be aggravated, as able writers in the Calcutta newspaper *Capital* have been pointing out, by the artificial value given to the rupee, a value the Natives have to pay for. Less comes to them as product of their labour, and the importing power of the country is diminished. Financial troubles for the Government, therefore, darken the near future, but that is a large subject that we cannot enter upon now. All we are able to do is to keep the needs of India before the public. They are still great enough to alarm the most optimistic out of their serenity.

Subscriptions to our little fund, from which not a penny is deducted for advertisements in newspapers or any other kind of charges, may be sent to A. J. Wilson, at this office; cheques to be crossed "Union Bank of London, Indian Famine Fund."

Amount previously acknowledged.. .. £938 14 8

Remittances should be made to Mr. A. J. Wilson, *Investors' Review* office, Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, Strand, W.C.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS.

SOME OPINIONS OF THE INDIAN PRESS.

THE "TIMES OF INDIA."

The appointment of the Hon. Mr. Chandavakar to act in the High Court during Mr. Justice Ranade's absence, on six months' leave, will, without doubt, be regarded with general satisfaction. It is distinctly an appointment upon merit. A large and lucrative practice, which has been steadily growing for some years past, has testified to the confidence which the public have in Mr. Chandavakar as a lawyer, and we believe there is ample warrant for saying that Bench and Bar alike approve of a selection which places in the High Court a man of marked judicial temperament and of adequate professional equipment. To the public outside the Courts the new Judge is known as a man of exceptional intellectual gifts, which have been kept bright by the most industrious exercise in the public interest. When it was announced some weeks ago that Mr. Chandavakar would preside over the National Congress at Lahore it was recognised that his presidency would give the stamp of sobriety and good sense to the deliberations of that body, and that from the Presidential chair there would be certain to emanate no counsels that would not be helpful alike to rulers and ruled. There is no need at this time to define Mr. Chandavakar's position in relation to the political and social movements of the day. It is sufficient to say that that position is such that we shall welcome his appearance at the head of the important assembly that is to be held next week, and that it is a ground for satisfaction that his appointment to the High Court will commence at a date which will enable him to take part with perfect propriety in proceedings at Lahore, in the guidance of which, we believe, he will be enabled to perform distinct public service.—(December 22.)

THE "CHAMPION."

We congratulate the Congress Committee upon their selection of President, and we also congratulate Mr. Chandavakar, upon whom their choice has fallen. The honourable gentleman is not only known to Bombay, but wherever intellectual India congregates there Mr. Chandavakar is welcome. He was one of the first delegates who went to England—many years ago—to plead the cause of his country, and it is but meet that there should now be given to him the highest honour at the disposal of educated India. Complaints have been made that Mr. Chandavakar is too moderate for the stirring times in which we live, but in the Indian reform party there will always be a place for such as he, and we should be extremely grieved if he were not to be found in that place. Some of us go too fast, some of us may go too slow—but the average, being progress, must be satisfactory. We have only one other remark to offer. Mr. Chandavakar is a Bombay man, and we hope all of his fellow townsmen—who possibly can—will lend him the support of their presence at Lahore. —(December 9.)

THE "MAHRATTA."

We cannot say what are the real sentiments of the public in the sister Presidencies over the election of Mr. Chandavakar. Perhaps they are not well aware of the parts recently played by Mr. Chandavakar. But in Bombay at least the election will be a disappointment. —(December 9.)

THE "TRIBUNE."

The selection has one special recommendation in Mr. Chandavakar being a Mahratta, the first man of his race to preside over the deliberations of the National Assembly, though the services rendered by his people to the cause of Indian progress and reform are by no means the least conspicuous in comparison with those of other Indian communities.—(December 6.)

It was expected, though it is to be regretted, that the election of the Honourable Mr. N. G. Chandavakar to the Presidentship of the forthcoming Congress has elicited dissent in certain quarters. The *Mahratta* of Poona takes strong exception to the selection, and those who know of the relations that have existed between the orthodox and reform parties in the Bombay Presidency need not be surprised at the fact. The *Mahratta* represents the large and influential orthodox party with which Mr. Tilak is identified, while the party of reform claims Mr. Chandavakar as one of the ablest and most forward of its exponents. We are certain that the remarks of the *Mahratta* are not prompted by personal feelings, and we can understand that it is natural even for the best of men to take those who hold opposite views on important questions as not of the right sort. But in matters of national importance the calmest considerations should prevail, and true patriotism should not wince under the test of unpleasant situations to be faced at times. . . . There are many matters in which we ourselves have strong differences with Mr. Chandavakar, but we do not doubt his patriotism as we admire his ability, and we believe he will make good use of the position of honour to which he has been selected.—(December 15.)

THE "GUJARATI."

Now that Mr. Chandavakar has accepted the presidential post there need be no anxiety about the success of the next session of the Congress. Though interested or shallow-pated publicists have now and then been busy making out that he does not sympathise with the Congress, simply because he has not hitherto taken a very active part in the movement, no one who knew his views had the least suspicion about his attitude. The President-elect, with all his sympathy with the Social Conference, has, unfortunately, not been able to actively co-operate with its promoters. But no one has, therefore, accused him of indifference or unfriendliness towards that movement. Mr. Chandavakar successfully presided over the Provincial Conference held at Karachi, and it is in the fitness of things that he should now be called upon to accept the Presidentship of the National Congress.—(December 9.)

THE "INDU PRAKASH."

If there are obstinate ultra-Radicals amongst us who would make such a stern demand upon the conscience of public leaders as to be indisposed to tolerate a difference of opinion even on a question of private courtesy like that which Mr. Chandavakar, along with others, showed to Lord Sandhurst, we may console ourselves with the thought that in the opposite camp too there would be extreme sectarians who would consider it an outrage that Government should honour a gentleman who could make the kind of slashing attack with which our new judge enlivened the debate in the Local Council over the Mofussil Municipal and District Board Act Amendment Bill. We will let these two extremes cancel each other and thus justify our entire elimination of them from the general sober public, whose unanimous approval may unquestionably be pronounced to have been secured by the providentially synchronous double elevation of Mr. Chandavakar, firstly by the best exponents of public opinion to the chairmanship of the Congress, and secondly, by a discriminating Government to the lofty position of a High Court Judge. This double mark of approval has a meaning not to be overlooked. Is it not curious that the same man whom the Indian popular party should select for special honour should also be the man whom Government too should select for an office requiring not only great capacity and attainments but an established reputation for sobriety, steadiness, and honesty of purpose? This is by no means the first case of the kind. It has been the same tale over and over again with gentlemen selected for judgeships, for memberships of Councils by nomination, pure and simple, for seats in important commissions of enquiry, and we may even add, for most of the higher Birthday and New Year's day honours. To the latter the passport is still proved ability and assured confidence of the public, whatever cringing may be necessary for obtaining the minor honours of Sahib and Bahadurships. And for these higher honours Government have after all to fix upon a Mehta, a Telang, a Mandlik, and a Chandavakar—*i.e.*, upon men who first come to light as trusted leaders of the public. In the light of this grand central fact, may we not legitimately ask the question if there is much force in the routine official cry that the demands of the Indian popular party are the demands of extremists, that the men who lead it and shape its programme are neither intrinsically nor extrinsically entitled to serious consideration?—(Dec. 20.)

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

SIXTEENTH SESSION.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT, THE HON. N. G. CHANDAVAKAR.

WE give below a full report of the first part of the address delivered by the Hon. N. G. Chandavakar, at Lahore, on December 27 last, as President of the Sixteenth Session of the Indian National Congress. We shall take another opportunity of printing the concluding portion of Mr. Chandavakar's address. He said:—

Brother Delegates,—I thank you most sincerely for the high honour which you have conferred upon me by electing me to this office, and for the kind and cordial reception you have accorded to me. The nomination of a President for the Indian National Congress is annually followed with deep interest throughout the country, and till last year your choice fell upon men whose claim to your suffrages was far greater than mine. It was, therefore, with a feeling of considerable diffidence that I accepted the invitation to become your President. I am deeply sensible of the responsibilities of the position which your good-will has now assigned to me, and of my own shortcomings. Your summons, calling me to this duty, was served on me rather late, when there was not much time left for me to get ready for the work; but I have obeyed your call, for I regard it as the country's call. I am in your hands; take me as I am with all my defects. All I can say in profound acknowledgment of the confidence which you have reposed in me is that I will try my best to deserve it.

"THE POLITICAL CONSCIENCE OF THE COUNTRY."

Diffident as I am, I draw hope and inspiration for the proper discharge of my duties from those I see before me. There is something elevating in the remembrance of the fact that you over whose deliberations I have to preside are all earnest men, animated by a pure love of their country. And with your support and sympathy I hope I

shall not prove unworthy of the great honour you have done me—an honour which I value all the more because it has fallen to my share to sit here at Lahore in the Presidential chair as the successor of that noble-minded man, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. This is the first Congress that I attend after an absence of ten years, having attended all the previous Congresses, and though I have never been alienated from it, I cannot conceal from you my feeling that I return to my old love. If what the poet says is true that "short absence urges sweet return," how much sweeter is the return when the absence is long? I look back and find that in ten years the Congress movement has gathered strength and force, which is very reassuring. Time was when your President had at these gatherings to devote the best portion of his inaugural address to certain criticisms against the Congress, and to deal with a certain kind of opposition, ridicule, and misunderstanding to which our movement stood exposed. Our right to call ourselves "national," "loyal," and so on was questioned; but that is all more or less past history. We do not now hear much of the old cries that raged round our heads—or, if we hear something of them now and then, they are more or less faint echoes of decaying creeds which serve to remind us that the Congress has, in spite of them, grown and marched on; and if I were asked how we stand at this moment, I should say that the Indian National Congress, having outlived the stage of active opposition, entered on the era of achievement when the Legislative Councils were expanded and the Welby Commission was appointed, and now it has arrived at a period when more than ever it can justify its existence as the political conscience of the country.

THE CONGRESS AND "THE INCREASING POVERTY OF INDIA."

For just look about and examine the circumstances under which we meet here. Since you last met under the presidency of that good man and true—Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt—the country has passed through a calamity the severest of its kind. No less an authority than the noble statesman who is now at the head of our Government has spoken of it as a "famine which, within the range of its incidence, has been the severest that India has ever known." The country has suffered from two famines which have followed in swifter succession than any two previous ones, and, great as has been the misery, acute as has been the suffering they have entailed upon the people, they have at the same time served as object-lessons by bringing responsible statesmanship nearer than ever to a consciousness of the gravity and urgency of the great problem which the Indian National Congress has been pressing on the attention of our rulers from the very day of its birth, sixteen years ago, in Bombay. That problem could not be expressed in more definite and appropriate language than was used when the Second Session of the Indian National Congress, which met at Calcutta at the end of the year 1886, under the presidency of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji—that Nestor of Indian politicians—passed its second resolution in these terms:—"That this Congress regards with the deepest sympathy, and views with grave apprehension, the increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population of India." At every subsequent Session of the Congress stress was laid upon the grave character of the problem; resolutions were passed and speeches made pointing out the seriousness of the situation caused by the increasing poverty of the masses in India. But it takes long for the reforming spirit to move, and great movements pledged to principles which are opposed to current ideas have sometimes to wait till Providence itself has to take their side. In their case history repeats itself in a manner in which it perhaps rarely repeats itself in other cases. You all remember the history of the Free Trade agitation in England. Speaking many years ago on the subject, the late Mr. Bright said that the Free Traders had to carry on their agitation under tremendous difficulties, and it was only when famine stalked throughout the land and Providence came to their help that the responsible statesmen of the country became converts to the Free Trade Gospel and Mr. Cobden won his cause. We find ourselves in a somewhat similar situation now in this country. The last two famines have in a way brought Providence to our help; it has taken up the cry of the Congress, and it seems as though you heard from everywhere—"The Congress is coming to be right after all." For, when the Viceroy had to say, in his last "Statement on Famine," of a province like Gujerat, generally considered rich, that "the weakness and incapacity for resistance of the people took the Local Government by surprise," we may fairly say that the position taken up by the Congress from the beginning "about the increasing poverty of vast numbers of the population of India" is being practically recognised by those who hold the destinies of this country in their hands.

THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM—A POLICY OF DRIFT.

I do not wish by any means to affirm that the Government had ignored the problem altogether in the past, or that it had been altogether unmindful of its gravity. Nor is it my intention to assert that it had hitherto done nothing to cope with it. If I said that, I should be doing injustice to the memory of those British statesmen who have repeatedly called attention to it, and have in their own way devised or suggested remedies. One has only to read the writings and speeches of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji to find out that in calling attention to the poverty question in India during the last twenty years, if not more, he has taken his stand, among other things, on the authority of several British Indian officials and administrators. But my point is this: that the Government has not approached its solution in a broad, comprehensive, masterly spirit, worthy of British statesmanship and worthy of so great an Empire as that of her Majesty in India. The policy it has pursued in dealing with the problem and attempting its solution has been a policy of what Lord Rosebery would call "patches." And we need not be surprised at that, however much we may deplore it. There is indeed much in the British character which justly calls for admiration and appreciation. Its genius is practical; its devotion to duty, its sympathy for suffering, and its practical benevolence, as the last famine administration has shown, are unflinching and unswerving—and it has "the old strength to dominate circumstances." This is its strength; but, as often happens, what is our strength becomes at times our weakness. A people whose genius is practical, and whose saving quality is the capacity to be roused in the face of an intolerable evil, is apt to let things slide until they cause suffering, which might have been by wise foresight and judicious management prevented. And this is what has often happened both in England and in India. What Lord Rosebery complained of nearly a year ago in the case of administration in England holds good in the case of administration in India also. "I humbly think," said his lordship, "that in this country"—meaning England—"we live a great deal too much from hand to mouth. . . . . We are a people of enormous waste. We waste simply by not pursuing scientific methods." One has only to look back to see how true this is when applied to the policy that has been pursued in dealing with the agrarian problem in particular in India. So long ago as January, 1883, so sober and thoughtful a journal as the *Spectator* of London said: "All accounts, independent and official, show that the ultimate difficulty of India, the economic situation of the cultivator, is coming to the front in a most disheartening way, and is exciting among the most experienced officials a sensation of positive alarm." And then it went on to say what illustrates the point I am now making, that the Government in India are faced "by a compulsion to pass small measures when they know that only large measures could succeed, and doubt their right to sanction them." To take one of several instances: for years before 1875 the indebtedness of the Deccan rayat had been a theme of loud complaint in the public press and elsewhere, but it was only when the rayat, in sheer desperation, took the law into his own hands, and cut off the noses of his Marwari money-lenders, that the Government of Bombay woke up to the situation, and appointed a Commission to enquire into it. When the Commission, among other things, reported about the rigidity of the land revenue system, the Government left that larger question aside, and went to tackle the money-lender. We had the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act passed to put restrictions on the money-lender. That was equity to some extent, but it was what Sir Raymond West called in his comments on the working of the Act some years afterwards "lop-sided equity," for as he put it:—"The rayat must pay the tax-gatherer, but as to other creditors the law protects him from the obligation of meeting his liabilities." But the Government stood by its guns so far as its own land revenue system was concerned. It defended that system, and we find, a year after the Act I speak of came into force, Dr. Pollen (now retired), who was appointed to administer the provisions of the Act, reporting as follows:—"No steps that I am aware of have yet been taken that the revenue demand should be so timed and adjusted as not to drive the rayat to the sowkar, even temporarily, in order to meet it." I do not wish to dogmatise on the effects of this Act, for I know there are officials who hold—and their testimony is entitled to weighty and respectful consideration—that it has brought some comfort to the rayat. But, as a British revenue official of the Bombay Presidency put it in recording his experiences of the Act, by it "debtors are comforted, creditors are tormented." But the mischief of the rigidity of the land revenue system was left untouched. That is an instance of passing what the *Spectator* of London called in 1883 "small measures." And this small measure has not saved the Deccan rayat from falling an easy prey to famine visitations. Mr. Justice Ranade, who was in favour of the Act, and had a great deal to do in administering its provisions before he was raised to the Bench, was cautious enough to say in his report in 1881: "Of course, a famine visitation would expose the people's solvency to a test." Since then two famines have put it to the test—and we know with what results. Another illustration of this policy is afforded by the complaint of the Honourable Mr. Nicholson that though during the last thirty years there have been connected with agriculture numerous conferences, committees, reports, and resolutions, yet nothing has been done. Ten years ago an Agricultural Committee, appointed by the Government of Madras, suggested the establishment of agricultural schools and farms in half-a-dozen stations to start with. The Government of India took the question out of the hands of the Local Government, and did not arrive at any final decision for some years. In the case of the Purandhur Bank scheme, the Secretary of State took the matter out of the hands of the Government of India and the Bombay Government, and refused to allow the experiment to be tried on a small scale. This illustrates one of the obstacles to the carrying out of agricultural reform. The local Governments have to obtain the approval of the Government of India to their schemes, and they have to wait until the latter authority has had time to consider them and hit upon a scheme which will be suitable to all parts of the Indian Continent. As has been well remarked, "Indian official life is short, but Indian discussions are long," and officers who have expended much thought in elaborating schemes of reform have seldom a chance of seeing their labours turned to practical account. When they retire from the service their places are taken by others who have not the same knowledge or interest in the subject. For instance, Mr. Nicholson has devoted his attention to the question of agricultural banks; but it is only now, when he has but a few years of official life left in India, that he is appointed a member of a committee on the subject. More instances of this policy could be cited—a policy which has hesitated to deal with the agrarian problem in a thorough-going, broad, and statesmanlike spirit. What occurs to one on this subject is the question:—Cannot each Presidency be allowed to work out its salvation in the matter of agricultural reform in the way it thinks best? Surely one would suppose that a Presidency has large enough area for this purpose, and it is only by instituting a large number of experiments that the true method can be found. If this were done, there would be healthy rivalry between the several Presidencies, and they would profit by the failure and successes of one another.

WANTED: A STATESMANLIKE AND COURAGEOUS POLICY.

The fact is it has been more or less a policy of *drift*; it has left an evil to grow till it became acute, and then it has tried to grapple with it on the surface, and that too by fits and starts. India, we are told, is and ought to be above party politics, and I admit that there is no

sounder maxim for administrative guidance. But if we have been above party politics, we have not escaped being the victims of petty politics. The problem is great, but the measures hitherto adopted for its solution have been small. "India House traditions," wrote the late Sir James FitzJames Stephen in his "Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography," published in 1849, "tell that when a young aspirant for distinction there requested one of the Chairs to inform him what was the proper style of writing political despatches, the Chair made answer: '*The style we prefer is the humdrum.*'" And it is the humdrum style that has been adopted, generally speaking, in dealing with what now has become a very serious problem—the poverty of the people. It is no use crying, however, over spilt milk. Both the Government and the people have to co-operate in right earnest and to look ahead. The question now is: "Is the policy of the future to be one of drift, or of wise well-regulated direction?" There are signs and indications already that the policy of drift will not be the policy of the future, but that there will be a serious attempt to deal with the problem of poverty and famine prevention in a broad, statesmanlike and courageous manner. We have now at the helm of the Government of India a statesman of whom we may justly say that he promises to be all that a Viceroy of India ought to be. That he has won the hearts of the people and that the people trust in him goes without saying, and the enthusiastic receptions he met with during his recent tour bear unmistakable testimony to his growing popularity. Lord Curzon has won the hearts of the people, because since he came amongst us as our Viceroy he has been more than a mere abstraction—he has been a flesh-and-blood Viceroy, who, whether he issues resolutions, or makes speeches on State matters, seems to the people to address them and desire to take them into his confidence, and make his presence, his personality, and his energy felt throughout the land. His Excellency made a statement on famine early in October last, and the assurance he then gave, after describing the woeful state to which the country had been reduced by the calamity, is reassuring. He said that the Government would "not sit idle until the next famine comes, and then bewail the mysteries of Providence." It is not the Viceroy's sympathy alone that has been aroused by the famine that we have passed through. As has been remarked in many a quarter, one bright spot in the dark scene of the last famine is that it has served to draw closer the British officials and the people. Every word of what Lord Curzon said in his Statement on Famine in cordial acknowledgment of "the administrative knowledge, the unflagging energy, and the devotion of the British officers" is endorsed throughout the country. These officers have worked silently amidst heart-rending scenes, and have now experience more than ever that such suffering as the people have had to endure has been the acutest of its kind. Moreover, the great heart of the British nation has been moved by the calamity, and its benevolence, as also the benevolence of America and some other countries, has realised our position and come to our aid. But one is forcibly reminded here of the great dictum of the late Mr. Bright that it is not *benevolence* but *justice* alone which can cope with gigantic evils; and may we not reasonably hope that sympathy so aroused will not fade before the problem forced on its attention by the last famine is solved in a spirit worthy of Imperial statesmanship?

Fallacious Notions of Indian Poverty.

There are two or three notions of which we have to get rid before the problem of agrarian indebtedness and poverty in India is approached. That famines occur because the monsoon fails no one denies. In a sense they are inevitable in India; but no more inevitable, for instance, than in Ireland or Egypt. If the latter country was able to tide over this year of the lowest Nile in the century without a famine, why should not India be able to do the same when the rainfall fails? No famine policy is worth the name which does not discard the pusillanimous doctrine that famines are inevitable, and that, therefore, not much can be done. The question which has been forcing itself on the attention of all serious thinkers and responsible administrators is, not "Why do famines occur?" but "Why do they occur in *increasing* severity, and why is the *staying power* of the people going down?" I do not think that anybody seriously believes in the *population* theory which is so often propounded in certain quarters as an answer to the question. There are a score of countries where population has been increasing much faster than in India, and yet they have not been struck down by the phenomenal poverty which is staring us in the face in this country. Sir Robert Giffen, speaking recently before the Manchester Statistical Society on the achievements of the 19th century which is now closing, pointed out the prodigious rate at which the community of European nations had grown and was growing. The other notion is that we are a nation of spendthrifts, and that our rayats in particular fall easy victims to bad times because they do not save. There are eminent authorities, official and non-official, who have, from their experience of the people in general and the rayats in particular, challenged the correctness of that view. The average English labourer is not known to be more provident than the Indian rayat, who has, further, this natural advantage in his favour that he requires less food and fewer necessaries of life by way of clothing. If he spends on marriages more than he ought to, the benefit of such mild extravagance goes to other rayats of his class and goes not without return. What is spent on marriages is mostly in the shape of ornaments; and ornaments serve as a resource to fall back upon in time of distress. This was pointed out in the case of the rayats of the Deccan by the Deccan Rayats Commission; and I see that the Hon. Mr. B. K. Bose, who is known to measure his words carefully, says the same on the authority of those who ought to know in the case of the agricultural classes of the Central Provinces. If further proof were wanted of the extravagance of the accusation brought against the rayat, we have it afforded by an observation made by His Excellency the Viceroy from his place in the Viceregal Legislative Council some months ago. His Excellency computed the gross annual agricultural produce of the Indian Empire to be worth 400 crores of rupees, which gives Rs. 20 per head as the gross annual income of the agricultural classes. Out of this, nearly Re. 1-8 go in payment of the Government assessment on land, and of the balance Re. 1-8 in payment of indirect taxation. We may safely challenge those who talk of the rayat's extravagance to point out another peasant in the world who can maintain himself in normal years on Rs. 17 per annum. And yet he is expected to make a saving out of it! Whatever else our rayats may be, they are not a nation of spendthrifts. The national ideal is one of asceticism, not athleticism, and our people live very much up to it. That in itself would be an answer to the charge of extravagance. But even assuming that the rayat does spend something on marriages, it cannot be very much after all, and surely life must be made not only tolerable but a little pleasant even to the Indian cultivator. If, in his case, we cannot, as the late Mr. Gladstone desired in the case of the British workman, level up his status so as to enable him to have a piano in his cottage, we need not at least grudge him some expense on marriage and other festive occasions which add charm to life.

The Government, the Money Lender, and the Rayat.

The problem is, no doubt, complicated, but much depends on the views which a ruler takes of the possibilities and limitations of the power of Government to benefit the people. It is just possible to exaggerate the one or the other. Those who hold exaggerated notions of the possibilities, regarding them as equivalent to those of Divine Providence, are doomed to discomfiture; but this, at any rate, must be said for them that they "will not bind their soul with clay." Those, on the other hand, who exaggerate the limitations of human governments are those to whom hope never comes, and who can only plunge a race or a nation deeper into the depths of misery and despondency than they found it. It is encouraging to find that our present Viceroy has no superstitious belief in the virtues of official action. At the same time he is not a fatalist in the matter of administration. No one pretends—and if any one does, there are very few of the class—that agrarian indebtedness is due solely to any particular cause. What is complained of is that the Government has but touched the fringe of the subject hitherto in dealing with the question of its solution. For instance, take the question of the share which the money-lender on the one hand and our law courts on the other are said to have had in deepening the rayat's poverty. The money-lender is not a creature entirely of the British Government; but, as years ago Sir Erskine Perry, once Chief Justice of Bombay, pointed out, whereas before the advent of the British in India the money-lender was either some Bunnia or Brahmin of the village, whose interests and fortunes were identified with those of the rayats to whom he lent, after that the Marwari adventurer took his place. The rayat did, and does, require protection from the grasping money-lender, but it is admitted on all hands that he cannot do without the money-lender altogether. Now we may fairly ask this question—Have the attempts hitherto made to save the rayat from the money-lender's clutches proved the rayat's salvation? Take the case of the law to which I have above referred—the Deccan Agriculturists' Relief Act, passed in 1879. Its main object has been to save the Deccan rayats from the exactions of money-lenders and to prevent in that way lands from passing from the former to the latter. There is a suggestion now that the Act which applies to some of the districts of the Bombay Presidency should be extended to all. But those of us who have had to do with the course of litigation under the Act have reason to fear that the relief which is given by the Act to the rayat is more apparent than real. The rayat is allowed to sue his money-lender without any charge for court-fee for his litigation. The Court scrutinises his dealings with his creditors with a great deal of jealousy, and helps him to get his land freed from exorbitant demands. That is so far for the good of the rayat, but does the good go to him? What professional men like myself, having to deal with cases under the Act, often find is that the rayat is only the man who figures on the scene, but behind him is some one fighting his battle, spending the money for him, carrying on the litigation, and getting probably all the benefit of the Act intended to save the rayat. The Act in fact substitutes one creditor for another: but all the same the rayat is not saved. This is a point which has struck nearly all those who have any experience of litigation connected with the Act. It is my impression—and the impression of several of my brother pleaders—gathered in the course of professional business. It is said that the tendency of the rayat to have "frequent recourse to the law courts"—I borrow the words used by his Excellency the Viceroy in his reply to the address of the Mahajana Sabha of Madras the other day—has contributed to his impoverishment. The Hon. Mr. Toynbee drew the attention of the Government to this phase of the problem during the discussion on the last Budget in the Viceroy's Legislative Council—to the steady increase which is taking place year by year in the Government revenue from court fees and the enormity of the law charges. He said: "The character of our courts is a cause of our poverty." Undoubtedly it is a striking fact that large and highly paid judicial establishments are kept up to deal with litigation the bulk of which—*i.e.*, over 60 per cent., as an examination of the statistics shows—concerns property or transactions worth less than Rs. 50. But this character of our litigation is not so much a cause as an indication of the poverty of the country, showing how small the transactions of the community are. It is proposed to pass a law for the Mofussil on the lines of the Arbitration Act which applies to Presidency towns. That is a good move in the right direction and may help the rayat to some extent, but will not save him from his load of indebtedness.

MAHOMETANS AND THE CONGRESS.

At a public meeting of the citizens of Lahore on December 11, held to elect delegates for the sixteenth Session of the Indian National Congress, Moulvi Moburrum Ali Chishti, editor and proprietor of the *Rafiq-i-Hind*, delivered a brief but notable speech, which is reported by the *Tribune* of December 13 as follows:—

At the municipal elections, he said, there was great stir and bustle in the town, but the election which was the business of that meeting he held to be a hundred times more important. It was a national honour to be elected as a delegate to the Congress. He saw familiar

and well known faces around him, but missed that of one of the greatest workers in the cause—he meant Bakhshi Jaishi Ram. The speaker as well as the audience were visibly moved at the sorrowful allusion. Owing to the loss of such an earnest worker, and other reasons he need not mention in detail, it had become all the more necessary to work with whole-hearted devotion and zeal to ensure the success of the forthcoming Session. We sometimes heard it said (the Moulvi went on to say) that the interest in the Congress movement was waning, and that less and less enthusiasm was manifested on its behalf. Not only were there misrepresentations—significant illustrations of wish being father to the thought—like this, but he had seen in a certain newspaper false and absurd rumours circulated regarding the movement. There were a few days to the gathering, and all critics—honest or otherwise—would then have an opportunity of observing how the Congress was increasing in strength and importance. It was not surprising that the Congress had not more adherents; the surprising thing was that there were as many adherents as there were. The number of such men as stood up for the weak and voiced the grievances of the poor was always very small. The Congress was not for the interest of a party or individual, but for the good of all, irrespective of class, creed, or clique. He would refer, at another meeting to be held, to the question of Mussulman attitude towards the Congress, but he would say only this now that Mussulmans were not hostile to the national cause. They had still the *Panja Haidari* on them. The spirit of Islam was still alive in the race. And he was sure that if the ornamental Reises or toadies did not come, there would be a good contingent of sober and earnest Muslims among the delegates to this year's Congress. He once came across a *Pádri* who alluded to Muslims by a curious sign—that is by sawing his forefinger across his throat! What the missionary meant was that the chief characteristic of Islam was that it advocated *Jehad!* Alas, what erroneous views are prevalent with regard to this doctrine of *Jehad*. There are two kinds of *Jehad*, (1) *Asgar*, and (2) *Akbar*. The first and *lesser* related to the defence of religious rights and religious liberty; the second and *larger* involved the respectful representation to the Prince of the wants and worries of the poor. What a noble principle underlay the doctrine of true *Jehad*, viz., he would repeat, bringing to the notice of the King the troubles of the poor! *Jehad Asgar* (lesser *Jehad*) was only an insignificant portion of *Jehad*. The Congress could claim the support of all Muslims in regard to the teaching regarding *Jehad Akbar*. He (the speaker) would never believe that enlightened English rulers—like Sir Mackworth Young or Lord Curzon—could be against the Congress.

THE BRITISH COMMITTEE'S MANIFESTO.

Our very able and independent Anglo-Indian contemporary, the *Friend of India*, writes (Dec. 20):—

In commenting a day or two ago on the Manifesto of Sir William Wedderburn and his colleagues to the President of the approaching Indian National Congress, we referred to a time when, if the Congress is only true to itself, official neglect of its representations will be no longer possible. That it will be the fault of the Congress, or of the people of India whom it represents, should such a time not come, it seems to us, in view of what has already been accomplished by it, scarcely possible to doubt. At the same time it may be regarded as morally certain that it will be not so much through the direct influence of the Congress on Indian official opinion as through its influence on British public opinion that this result will be brought about. Legislative Councils notwithstanding, the Government of India is still essentially despotic. The Indian Constitution, that is, puts it in the power of the Government completely to disregard local public opinion, if so disposed, and there is no immediate prospect of any material alteration in this state of things. As a matter of fact, it is not always, or generally, that the Government adopts this course. In matters in which it has preserved a more or less open mind it consults, and is to some extent amenable to, what it chooses to regard as Indian public opinion. But, in the first place, there is a great multitude of cases in which its policy is so irrevocably fixed beforehand that, though it still commonly makes a show of consulting what it regards as public opinion, it does so merely for the sake of form; and, in the second place, it has not yet chosen, and has shown no sign of choosing, to regard the representations of the National Congress as expressing Indian public opinion. This view of the position is amply confirmed by the past history of the Congress and its achievements. Practically all that the Congress has accomplished—and it is unquestionable that it has accomplished much—has been achieved as a result of the influence brought to bear by its representatives in England, and their friends, on British public opinion. The Government of India is as powerless to disregard the wishes of the Home Government as it is powerful to ignore local opinion; and the Home Government, in its turn, is equally powerless to ignore the pressure of British public opinion when it has reached a certain point, no matter whether it derives its inspiration, directly or indirectly, from the Indian National Congress or from any other source. The moral of this is obvious. It is that, whatever else the Congress does, or leaves undone, it should leave no stone unturned to support its London Committee, not merely with facts and opinions, but with what is equally, if not more, important —funds. It may seem a hard thing, and no doubt it is a hard thing, that India cannot, in ordinary cases, hope to get justice from England without paying, and paying freely, for it. But it is a fact that must be recognised if justice is to be got, not, let it be remembered, because the British public is capable of knowingly setting a price on justice when it is once convinced that there is serious wrong to be redressed, but because the machinery that must be set and kept in motion to convince it cannot be worked without money and plenty of it. No one can read the appeal made by Sir William Wedderburn to the friends of the Congress in India, in the fourteenth paragraph of the Manifesto, and doubt that the London Committee at the present moment is in sore want of funds to enable it to continue the work which it has so far prosecuted with such encouraging success, and, it is to be feared, at such heavy cost to Sir William Wedderburn himself, or that, when he speaks of the parting of the ways having been reached, he has in view the imminent risk of the stoppage of the machinery he controls, for want of the money to keep it going. If the Indian public cannot be got to realise this, and to provide the remedy for it, then there is great danger of all their efforts proving mere sound and fury, signifying nothing.

DROUGHT AND IRRIGATION.

"WHO IS TO BLAME FOR THE FAMINES IN INDIA?"

Mr. Donald N. Reid addressed the following letter to the *Morning Post* (December 25):—

"When the bacteria of the soil come to be recognised as the best friends of the rayat, a season of drought in India will be welcomed as a blessing in disguise if water for irrigation is available. But as there are many doubting Thomases among the Anglo-Indian officials and at the India Office it would be absurd to ask them to only take the testimony of a planter as to the advantages of a dry season. I therefore quote from the reports of the directors of the experimental farm at Cawnpore to prove that the above-mentioned startling statement is correct. In the season 1880-81 the rainfall at the Cawnpore farm was only 6·70 inches from June 1, 1880, to March 31, 1881; and the following extract is taken from the assistant director's report on the outturn of wheat in this excessively dry season:—

"'In connexion with the subject of irrigation I may mention the extraordinary difference which exhibited itself between the outturn of wheat fields (a) ploughed up in July, and (b) not ploughed up till September. This was especially noticeable in the case of one field which had been originally intended for cotton, and a portion of which had been ploughed up at the commencement of the rains, while the remainder was left unploughed till September, when the whole field was ploughed up and sown with wheat. The strip which had been first ploughed was accurately marked by a broad band of wheat running down the field, almost twice as tall and as thick as on the later-ploughed portions. Two typical plots were marked out in both portions, and the crop carefully weighed. The result was:—

	Outturn per acre. Grain in lb.		Straw in lb.
Portion ploughed in July	1,630	..	2,676
Portion not ploughed till September ..	983	..	1,493'

"The above extract proves to the hilt the truth of the rayat's homely proverb, 'Merit dwells in the mouth of the spud.' This is the rayat's simple explanation of the advantage of thorough tillage—tillage which brings nitrification in its train. Season 1881-82 was another dry year at Cawnpore, the rainfall at the experimental farm being only eight-tenths of an inch from September 1, 1881, to March 31, 1882. And here are the assistant director's remarks on the outturn of wheat in this season:—

"'Measured by the farm crops the season was an extremely good one, and the outturn obtained from unmanured and not heavily-irrigated land would have been surprising to anyone who was not convinced of the natural fertility of Indian soil. The total area under wheat was 16·8 acres, not more than one-fourth of which had received manure during the preceding year. No field received more than three waterings after sowing, and a portion (about 4·1 acres) was only watered twice. Yet the average produce of wheat grain per acre was over 1,390lb. = 17 maunds, the maximum outturn amounting to so high a figure as 2,820lb., or 34 maunds = 47 bushels. One of the unmanured fields which had also only received two waterings yielded at the rate of 2,662lb., or 32 maunds per acre.'

"Now, let me give an extract from the Cawnpore farm report for season 1889-90, a season in which the rainfall at the farm was only three-tenths of an inch from October to March:—

"'In the season under review there were altogether 18 acres under wheat, and the total yield was 311 maunds 24 seers. The average yield was 17 1-3 maunds, or 22 bushels, to the acre. The highest yield reached 45½ bushels per acre. The unmanured plot in the duplicate series gave 23½ maunds, or 30 bushels. This is a remarkable outturn for land which has not received a particle of manure for the last seven years, and is cropped four times every three years.'

"Now, taking all the above-mentioned facts into consideration—and I have only quoted from official sources—it is impossible for the most bitter opponent of canals in India to prove that the canal at Cawnpore was anything but an unmixed blessing to the cultivators. If there had been an excess of saline matter in the surface soil it would have shown itself in those seasons of drought by killing the nitrifying organisms. But the extraordinary yield of wheat from unmanured land is in itself conclusive evidence that nitrification was more active in the rainless seasons than in ordinary seasons. I therefore put the question:—Who is to blame for the famines in India?"

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON INDIAN QUESTIONS.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE.

MR. DADABHAI NAOROJI'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, indefatigable as ever, proposes to deliver addresses on Indian questions as follows:—

January 14.—Penge and Beckenham Liberal and Radical Club, 76, Beckenham Road, Penge, at 8.30 p.m.

January 31.—Toynbee Hall.

February 10.—Hatcham Liberal Club.

February 25.—Mostyn Road Literary and Debating Society.

March 10.—Reading: (1) To members of the First Day Adult School, at 9.30 a.m.; (2) to the Castle Street Chapel Pleasant Hour Society, in the Chapel, at 3 p.m.

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"His recommendations are that the land tax should be moderated, that irrigation works should be constructed, and that the public debt and the public expenditure of India should be reduced. These proposals he supports with a wealth of detail of all kinds, which proves his mastery of the subject and makes good his claim to the attention of the governing authorities."—*The World.*

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